affiliated web site, the user logs in using the unique identifier, thereby ensuring that users can be identified notwithstanding proxy servers or different users using the same computer.

Still further, those of ordinary skill in the field will also understand that while the advertising server, the affiliate web site and the advertiser's web site are described as being in different geographic locations, that is not required. Still further, while the advertising server process, reporting process, derive profile process and management process are described as being implemented on one computer platform performing all of the above described functions, it is readily understood by those of skill that any or all of these functions may be implemented on one or more different computers and further that these processes may be performed at different nodes on the network.

We claim:

1. A network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol, comprising:

a user node having a browser program coupled to said network, said user node providing requests for information on said network;

a content provider affiliate node having a respective affiliate web site responsive to requests for information from said user node to provide media content, advertising space for display of advertising content and a link message to said user node;

an advertiser node having an advertiser web site including advertising content, said advertiser node responsive to a request to provide said advertising content; and

an advertisement server node storing information about said user node, said advertisement server node being responsive to a request from said user node based on said link message to select an advertiser node as a selected advertiser node based upon the information stored about said user node at said advertisement server node, and identify said advertiser node as said selected advertiser node to said user node,

whereby said advertising content from said selected advertiser node is displayed at said user node.

2. A network in accordance with claim 1, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on the number of times said advertising content has been previously displayed at said user node.

3. A network in accordance with claim 1, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on the characteristics of said user.

4. A network in accordance with claim 3, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on at least one of the characteristics of said user selected from the group consisting of user ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital certificate, geographic location, time zone, country, domain type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer, industry type, company size, number of employees, types of advertisements previously viewed and types of advertisements previously clicked.

5. A network in accordance with claim 1, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

6. A network in accordance with claim 1, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

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7. In a network <u>supporting the hypertext transfer protocol and</u> having a user node including a browser program coupled to said network, said user node providing requests for information on said network, a content provider affiliate node having a respective affiliate web site responsive to requests for information from said user node to provide media content, advertising space for display of advertising content and a link message to said user node, a

plurality of advertiser nodes, each of said plurality of advertiser nodes having a respective advertiser web site including respective advertising content, each of said advertiser nodes responsive to a respective request to provide respective advertising content, a network node comprising:

an advertisement server node storing information about said user node and responsive to a request from said user node based on said link message to select an advertiser node as a selected advertiser node based upon the information stored about said user node at said advertisement server node, and identify said advertiser node as said selected advertiser node to said user node, whereby said advertising content from said selected advertiser node is displayed at said user node.

8. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 7, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on the number of times said advertising content has been previously displayed at said user node.

9. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 7, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on the characteristics of said user.

10. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 9, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on at least one of the characteristics of said user selected from the group consisting of user ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital certificate, geographic location, time zone, country, domain type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer, industry type, company size, number of employees, types of advertisements previously viewed and types of advertisements previously clicked.

11. A network node in accordance with claim 7, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

12. A network node in accordance with claim 7, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

13. In a network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol and having a user node including a browser program coupled to said network, said user node providing requests for information on said network, an advertiser node having an advertiser web site including advertising content, said advertiser node responsive to a request to provide said advertising content, and an advertisement server node storing information about said user node and responsive to a request from said user node to select an advertiser node as a selected advertiser node based upon the information stored about said user node at said advertisement server node, and identify said advertiser node as said selected advertiser node to said user node, wherein said advertising content from said selected advertiser node is displayed at said user node, a network node comprising:

a content provider affiliate node having a respective affiliate web site responsive to requests for information from said user node to provide media content and

advertising space for display of advertising content, said content provider affiliate web site further providing a link message to said user node identifying the IP address of said advertisement server node to said user node for providing advertising content for said advertising space, wherein the advertising content is selected by said advertisement server node based upon the information stored about said user node at said advertisement server node.

14. A network node in accordance with claim 13, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

15. A network node in accordance with claim 13, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing said IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

~~16. A network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol~~ comprising:

a user node having ~~a browser~~ program coupled to said ~~network, said~~ user node providing requests for ~~information on said network.~~

~~a content provider affiliate node having a respective~~
affiliate web site responsive to requests for information
from said user node to provide media content, adver-
tising space for display of advertising content and a link
message to said user node; and
an advertisement server node <u>storing information about said</u>
   <u>user node and</u> responsive to a request from said user node
based on said link message to select an advertising banner for
said advertising space <u>based upon the information stored</u>
<u>about said user node</u>, and to reply to said request from said
user node by identifying said advertising banner to said user
      node,
whereby said advertising banner from said advertisement
   server node is displayed at said user node in said
advertising space.

      17. An advertisement server node in accordance with
claim 16, wherein said advertisement server node selects said
advertiser node based on the number of times said advertising
content has been previously displayed at said
user node.

      18. An advertisement server node in accordance with
claim 16, wherein said advertisement server node selects
said advertiser node based on the characteristics of said user.

      19. An advertisement server node in accordance with
claim 18, wherein said advertisement server node selects
said advertiser node based on at least one of the character-
istics of said user selected from the group consisting of user
ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital
certificate, geographic location, time zone, country, domain
type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer,
industry type, company size, number of employees, types of
advertisements previously viewed and types of advertise-
~~ments previously clicked.~~

    ~~20. A network in accordance with claim 16, further~~
including:
    wherein said advertisement server node is responsive to a
      request from said user node to identify an advertiser
      web site corresponding to said advertising banner;and
    an advertiser node having an advertiser web site including
      advertising content corresponding to said advertising
    banner, said advertiser node responsive to a request to
provide said advertising content corresponding to the
selection of said advertising banner by said user,
    whereby said advertising content from said advertiser
~~node is displayed at said user node.~~

      21. A network in accordance with claim 16, wherein said
link message is an HTML tag.

      22. A network in accordance with claim 16, wherein said
link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP
address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement
server node.

    ~~23. In a network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol~~
and comprising a user node having a browser program coupled
to said network, said user node providing requests for
~~information on said network, a content provider affiliate node~~

~~having a respective affiliate web site responsive to requests~~
for information from said user node to provide media content,
advertising space for display of advertising content and a link
message to said user node, a network node comprising:

an advertisement server node <u>storing information about
said user node and</u> responsive to a request from said user
node based on said link message to select an advertising
banner for said advertising space <u>based upon the information
stored about said user node at said advertisement server
node</u> , and to reply to said request from said user node by
identifying said advertising banner to said user node,
wherein said advertising banner from said advertisement
server node is displayed at said user node in said advertising
space.

24. An advertisement server node in accordance with
~~claim 23, wherein said advertisement server node selects~~

said advertising banner based on the number of times said advertising content has been previously displayed at said user node.

25. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 23, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on the characteristics of said user.

26. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 25, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on at least one of the characteristics of said user selected from the group consisting of user ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital certificate, geographic location, time zone, country, domain type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer, industry type, company size, number of employees, types of advertisements previously viewed and types of advertisements previously clicked.

27. A network node in accordance with claim 23, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

28. A network node in accordance with claim 23, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

~~29. In a network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol~~ and comprising a user node having a browser program coupled to said network, said user node providing requests for information on said network, an advertisement server node storing information about said user node and responsive to a request from said user node to select an advertising banner for said advertising space based upon the information stored about said user node, and to reply to said request from said user node by identifying said advertising banner to said user node, a network node comprising:

a content provider affiliate node having a respective affiliate web site responsive to requests for information from said user node to provide media content and advertising space for display of advertising content, said content provider affiliate web site further providing a link message to said user node identifying the IP address of said advertisement server node to said user node for providing an advertising banner for said advertising space, wherein the advertising banner is selected based upon the information stored about said user node at said advertisement ~~server node.~~

30. A network node in accordance with claim 29, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

31. A network node in accordance with claim 29, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing said IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

~~32. In a network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol~~ and comprising a user node having a browser program coupled to said network, said user node providing requests for information on said network a content provider affiliate node ~~having a respective affiliate web site responsive to requests~~

~~for information from said user node to provide media content~~, advertising space for display of advertising content and a link message to said user node, and an advertiser node having an advertiser web site including advertising content corresponding to said advertising banner, said advertiser node responsive to a request to provide said advertising content corresponding to the selection of said advertising banner by said user, a network node comprising:

an advertisement server node <u>storing information about said user node and</u> responsive to a request from said user node based on said link message to select an advertising banner for said advertising space <u>based upon the information stored about said user node</u>, and to reply to said request from said user node by identifying said advertising banner to said user node, wherein said advertisement server node is responsive to a request from said user node to identify an advertiser web site corresponding to said advertising banner, ~~whereby said~~

—advertising banner from said advertisement server node— is displayed at said user node in said advertising space, and whereby said advertising content from said selected advertiser node is displayed at said user node.

33. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 32, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on the number of times said advertising content has been previously displayed at said user node.

34. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 32, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on the characteristics of said user.

35. An advertisement server node in accordance with claim 34, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on at least one of the characteristics of said user selected from the group consisting of user ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital certificate, geographic location, time zone, country, domain type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer, industry type, company size, number of employees, types of advertisements previously viewed and types of advertisements previously clicked.

36. A network method in accordance with claim 35, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on the characteristics of said user.

37. A network method in accordance with claim 36, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on at least one of the characteristics of said user selected from the group consisting of user ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital certificate, geographic location, time zone, country, domain type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer, industry type, company size, number of employees, types of advertisements previously viewed and types of advertisements previously clicked.

38. A network method in accordance with claim 35, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertising banner based on the number of times said advertising content has been previously displayed at said user node.

39. A method in accordance with claim 37, said method further comprising:

sending a request from said user node to said advertising server web site responsive to selection of said advertising banner at said user node;

sending a reply from said advertising server web site to said user node identifying said advertiser web site corresponding to said advertising banner;

sending a request from said user node to said advertising web site to provide said advertising content corresponding to said advertising banner by said user;

sending a reply from said advertiser web site to said user node; and

displaying said advertising content at said user node.

40. A network node in accordance with claim 32, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

41. A network node in accordance with claim 32, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

~~42. In a network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol~~ and including a user node having a browser ~~program~~ coupled to said network, a ~~content provider~~ affiliate node having a ~~respective~~ affiliate web site containing media ~~content, advertising space for display of advertising content~~

a advertisement server node having an advertising server web site and storing information about said user node, a method for delivery of advertising to said user node, said method comprising:

sending a request for information from said user node to said affiliate web site requesting information;

sending a reply from said affiliate web site responsive to said request for information from said user node, said reply containing media content, advertising space for display of

advertising content and a link message to said user node;

sending a request from said user node based on said link message to said advertising server web site to provide an advertising banner for said advertising space;

selecting, at said advertising server web site, an advertising banner based upon the information stored about said user node;

sending a reply from said advertising server web site identifying said advertising banner to said user node; and

displaying said advertising banner in said advertising space at said user node.

43. A network method in accordance with claim 42, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

44. A network method in accordance with claim 42, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

45. In a network supporting the hypertext transfer protocol and including a user node having a browser program coupled to said network, a content provider affiliate node having a respective affiliate web site containing media content and advertising space for display of advertising content, an advertisement server node storing information about said user node, and an advertiser node having an advertiser web site including advertising content, a method for delivery of advertising content to said user node said method comprising:

sending a request for information from said user node to said affiliate web site requesting information;

sending a reply from said affiliate web site, responsive to said request for information from said user node, containing media content, advertising space for display of advertising content and a link message to said user node;

sending a request based on said link message from said user node to said advertisement server node to select an advertiser node;

selecting, at said advertisement server node, an advertiser node based upon the information stored about said user node;

sending a reply from said advertisement server node to said user node identifying said selected advertiser node;

sending a request from said user node to said advertiser node to provide said advertising content to said user;

sending a reply from said advertiser web site to said user node containing said advertising content; and

~~displaying said advertising content at said user node.~~

46. A network method in accordance with claim 45, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on the number of times said advertising content has been previously displayed at said user node.

47. A network method in accordance with claim 45, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on the characteristics of said user.

48. A network method in accordance with claim 47, wherein said advertisement server node selects said advertiser node based on at least one of the characteristics of said user selected from the group consisting of user ID, IP address, user cookie, user login code, user digital certificate,

geographic location, time zone, country, domain type, Internet service provider, organization type, employer, industry type, company size, number of employees, types of advertisements previously viewed and types of advertisements previously clicked. —

49. A network method in accordance with claim 45, wherein said link message is an HTML tag.

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50. A network method in accordance with claim 45, wherein said link message is an HTTP redirect message containing an IP address used to redirect said user node to said advertisement server node.

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